



1984

1984 - 1985 Editorial Objectives for Networker

Commission for Women

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EDITORIAL OBJECTIVES FOR NETWORKER

1984-85

1. To inform all Networker readers of the Commission for Women's activities and efforts;
2. To interpret the Commission's positions on current issues of concern to women and the campus community;
3. To provide a schedule of forthcoming events of special interest to women;
4. To highlight achievements of UT/K women, so that they may serve as role models;
5. To provide reports about off-campus...even global developments, which interest or affect women;
6. To encourage and promote specific female classes, groups and teams - - e.g., the Lady Vols;
7. To encourage and promote women in their professions.

The trend to single out women as a target audience of special publications within universities began in the early 1970s. Today there are dozens of such publications within heterogeneous, male-dominated universities and corporations whose administrators are supporting such forums of communications for the purpose of discussing issues pertinent to women, exploring new ideas and having access to information vital to their advancement. However, there is a move in some academic circles to merge these publications into mainstream periodicals. These moves occur most frequently because inflation is continuing, and federal grants to higher education institutions are declining - - with a resulting lowered concern for sexism as an academic problem. This circumstance occurs at a critical time for university women. Recent studies show that one in five female students have encountered some form of harassment from their professors, and one in four professional women are victims of male harassment.

Until such apparent discrimination is eliminated, there continues to be a need for many projects which relate to women's problems and women's rights. Hardly any project is more important than autonomous women's publications. If they are eliminated, the academic environment for females might revert to pre-liberation levels. Susan B. Anthony in 1900 first pointed out that when men control publications, no matter how indirectly, the articles in these publications soon reflect predominantly male ideas. In today's so-called women's publications (McCalls, Redbook, etc.), where men continue to fill the top editorial positions, women's ideas still seldom

get before the public, according to recent studies.

This situation is important to consider when assessing the positive-or-negative options of merging Networker with Context. Context is the official newsletter from the Chancellor's Office. The Commission for Women serves as an advisory body to the Chancellor. It is also a primary/^{monitor}of and a contributor to the progress of affirmative action at UT/K. It is the Commission's mandate to speak to the Administration on behalf of the women of UT/K. The Commission cannot credibly communicate with its constituents, in its role as an organization that represents them to the Administration, if it communicates with them through the Administration's official publication.

Minutes from the early meetings of the Commission for Women show that Chancellor Archie R. Dykes appointed the first Commission for Women in 1973 with instructions to hear grievances, investigate inequalities and educate students, staff and faculty about sex discrimination and sex bias. It is to provide an informational medium for these functions that Networker is especially suited.

A second point to remember when considering a possible merger with Context is that the Commission's constituency includes not only female faculty and staff, but also students. Context, as it is now distributed, does not reach students.

In providing a news outlet, especially targeted to all female members of the UT/K community, Networker lets women know that the Commission exists, and generates feedback so Commission members can effectively represent women's needs and concerns to the Administration. Networker informs women about day-to-day opportunities for them, such as seminars, courses, films,

career opportunities and the like. The publication - - well-written and well-read - - bonds women together and creates a "female fellowship", highlighting the achievements of women and providing role models. The Networker emphasizes self-education and internal communication. It is a publication with a specific audience which deserves specific information. The Networker is a step on the long journey toward building a vital communications outreach by the Commission for Women. The University of Tennessee can be proud that it supports this journey. The Administration should not consider anything that diverts it from its course or dilutes its informational impact!

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periodicals, ~~such~~ ^{These moves occur most frequently because inflation is continuing,} motivated largely by the conditions of inflation and

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~~at a critical time for university women. Recent~~ ^{at a critical time for university women. Recent} studies show one in five female students ~~state~~ ^{that} they have encountered some form of harassment from their professors, and one in four professional women ~~admit to having been~~ ^{are} victims of ~~harassment.~~ ^{male} harassment.

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~~autonomous women's publications. If they are eliminated, there is a real~~ ^{the academic environment for females may at} fear among communications experts that everything will revert ~~back to being~~ ^{to pre-liberalism levels.}

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(McCall, Redbock, etc.) ~~where men nevertheless~~ ^{where men nevertheless} fill the top editorial positions, women's ideas still seldom get before the public, ^{according to recent studies.}

~~It was~~ ^{It was} the well-known communications researcher Marshall McLuhan ~~who~~ ^{who} wrote in a landmark essay, The Medium Is The Message (1964), that the meaning of message content cannot be understood apart from the impact of the medium itself.

Is this relevant?

The latest approach to media study considers not only the content, but the medium and the cultural matrix within which the particular medium operates, McLuhan wrote.

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II The Networker

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